

MY SAFETY

Salinas woman guilty of election fraud

Chelcey Adami The Californian

Published 3:18 p.m. PT Sep. 22, 2016 | Updated 7:45 a.m. PT Sep. 23, 2016

A 39-year-old Salinas woman pleaded guilty to filing false or fraudulent signatures with the Monterey County Election Department while gathering signatures for a recall petition of a school district trustee.

In October 2014, Maria C. Del Toro was hired to gather signatures for a recall petition of Janet Barnes who was a Trustee with the Salinas City Elementary School District, according to Monterey County District Attorney's Office. She gathered a total of 397 signatures and was paid \$1,900 for her work.

The signatures gathered were then submitted to the election department, which then did a random sampling for authenticity. A significant number of signatures collected by Del Toro didn't match voter affidavit signatures on file with the Election Department, according to the DA's office, and an investigation by the DA's office confirmed that they were forged.

When confronted, Del Toro confessed to submitting forged signatures.

The recall was not successful, but Barnes was unseated in the following election.

Del Toro pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor charge of filing false or fraudulent signatures. She was sentenced to three years probation, 40 days in county jail, and was ordered to repay the \$1,900 she received for her work. The case was investigated by District Attorney Investigator Tracey Spencer.